Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1686 - December 4 2009

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1686 with a release date of Friday, December 4th 2009 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The FCC says its finally time to codify the Vanity Callsign system, more waivers granted by the FCC for employers to use ham employees in rescue radio drills, U-K hams stand ready if a bridge falls and Irelands national ham radio society gets an unexpected gift. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1686 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RADIO LAW: FCC LOOKS TO CODIFY VANITY CALLSIGN SYSTEM

The FCC has issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making titled WT Docket 09-209 that seeks to amend the Commission's Amateur Radio Service rules. This, to clarify certain regulations and codify existing procedures governing the vanity call sign system. It also would revise certain rules applicable to club stations. Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, reports:

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According to the FCC's November 25th release, almost 80,000 ham radio licensees have replaced their sequentially issued call signs with a vanity call sign since the program began in 1996. The FCC says the program began it established what tit called "the broad outlines" of the vanity call sign system to function under. As part of it the FCC concluded that call signs generally should not be available for reassignment for two years following the death of a licensee, or expiration or termination of the license for that call sign. In doing so, the Commission made exceptions for former holders of the call sign, close relatives of a deceased former holder and club stations of which a deceased former holder was a member.

The Commission did not, however, specify all of the procedures governing the vanity call sign system. Rather it indicated that the procedures would be set out in the Public Notices announcing 'starting gates' for the groups receiving initial priority and that the procedures would be adjusted from gate to gate as experience dictated. The procedures announced in that 1996 Public Notices announcing those gates are still in effect, but they are not set forth in the Commission's Rules. WT Docket 09-209 states that the FCC now believes that certain provisions should be codified into its rules, and others added, so that the vanity call sign system will be fair, equitable and transparent to all amateur service licensees.

Also when it released the 1996 vanity callsign Report and Order it used the opportunity to resume issuing new club station licenses. It now says that it believes that certain rule changes to the club station licensing rules may be appropriate.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tenant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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The comment period for WT Docket No. 09-209 will extend for 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. Historically, items appear in the Federal Register approximately 7 to 10 days after they appear on the FCC Web site. Reply comments can be made up to 75 days after publication in the Federal Register.
You can fine out more at
www.arrl.org/news/stories/2009/11/25/11220/?nc=1. (ARRL)

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RADIO EDUCATION: UNDERASTANDING THE VANITY CALLSIGN PROGRAM

And speaking about the Vanity Callsign System, have you ever wondered how it really works? Well the December issue of CQ Magazine truly does have all the answers. And it has them in a way that anyone can understand without having to have a copy of the Part 97 Amateur Service Rules at hand.

The article is titled The Perils and Pitfalls of Getting a Vanity Casllsign and its author is none other than, Fred Maia, W5YI, who was the founder of the nations second largest Volunteer Examiner Coordinator simply known as the W5YI VEC. And using a very simple question and answer format, Fred takes us on a trip from the dawning of the Vanity Callsign System to the present. Along the way he explains who is eligible for what type of vanity call, the reasons for this, the exceptions to the mandatory waiting time for a call to become available and much more.

If you have ever had any questions about the Vanity Callsign system and how to navigate it, this is your chance to get every detail in a clear and concise manner. Again the article is titled The Perils and Pitfalls of Getting a Vanity Casllsign by Fred Maia, W5YI. It begins on page 30 of the December 2009 issue of CQ Magazine that's on-sale right now. (CQ)

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RESCUE RADIO: MORE PART 97:113(a) (3) WAIVERS GRANTED BY FCC

The FCC has granted several more requests by hospitals and government agencies to permit hams in their employ to take part in emergency communications preparedness drills. Covered under this latest round of waivers to Section 97.113(a)(3) of the Amateur Service Rules are the Murray County Medical Center in Slayton, Minnesota; the Center for Emergency Response to Terrorism of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in Jefferson City, Missouri; the Culver City Fire Department in Culver City, California; the Draper City Police Department of Draper, Utah and the Town of North Attleboro and its Board of Health of North Attleboro, Massachusetts.

While most of the requests were for single day events, some like the request from the Draper City Police Department and the Murray County Medical Center were for multiple drills spread across several months. Both were given permits use of on staff hams on December 2, 2009 plus January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, and June 2 of 2010. The FCC also opened to door to granting further dates and additional hams by filing a

separate waiver request.

The FCC issued its first waiver of 97.113(a)(3) back on October 27th to the Commonwealth of Kentucky for a full-scale exercise on October 28th. In granting all of these waivers the FCC stated that it was in the public's interest to do so. (FCC)

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RADIO POLITICS: IARU SAYS TO GET READY FOR WRC-12

The next World Radiocommunications Conference takes place in January of 2012 and ham radio is making ready to face any challenges that it might bring to the service.

The International Amateur Radio Union's Secretary is Rod Stafford, W6ROD. He says that every IARU member society capable of doing so, should take the initiative to be in contact with their own telecommunications administration and let the it know what the Union's position is on those agenda items that influence the amateur radio service.

The most significant of these so far are the implementation of the radiolocation service in the range 30 to 300 MHz; the possible allocations in the range 3 to 50 MHz to the radiolocation service for oceanographic radar applications and the effect of emissions from short-range devices.

Also likely to be discussed is a ham radio allocation of about 15 kHz in parts of the band from 415 to 526.5 kHz. This, on a secondary basis and taking into account the need to protect existing services. (Southgate)

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RESCUE RADIO: UK HAMS WILL REPLACE PHONES IF CALVA BRIDGE FALLS

Preparations have been made to use amateur radio instead of telephones for calls to the emergency services. This if the Calva bridge near the United Kingdom city Cumbria collapses due to flooding. The North Pennines RAYNET Group website says should the bridge fall that it will be called out to cover 999 calls and this will be 24 hours a day operation until other lines of communications can be re-established.

According to a Cumbria County Council news release, if a collapse of the bridge takes place telephone communications would be lost to around 3,000 homes north of the river. To maintain communications to that area it says that ham radio operators will be available at certain locations to pass on calls to the various emergency services. Telephone service to the community affected is carried by cables that span the bridge. Ehile British Telecom believes alternate lines could handle any calls, the RAYNET hams are prepared for a full scale callout if they are needed.

In other U-K flood related news, the North Pennines RAYNET group, supported by RAYNET members from Merseyside, Lancashire and Dumfries & Galloway manned a single radio link from Friday morning, November 27th. It was set up between North Workington and Carlisle to provide resilience for 999 calls following the localized failure of British Telecom's cables due the Northside bridge collapse. The requirement for this finished at 15.30 U-T-C

the following day when all lines were restored. (Southgate)

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BREAK 1

 From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the N5NBI repeater serving New Orleans Louisiana.

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: ARRL VS MUSTANG OKLAHOMA ON TRANSMISSION BAN

Mustang, Oklahoma officials have yet to respond to a letter from ARRL Attorney Christopher D. Imlay, W3KD. This, regarding the city's attempt to keep a ham radio operators from transmitting. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in the newsroom with the details:

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The Mustang News on-line newspaper says that back on November 6th, ARRL General Counsel Christopher D. Imlay sent a seven page letter to Mustang city officials In it he urged the city to rescind a certified letter officials sent to Mustang Heights resident John Ripley, KD5WFT on October 30th. That letter told Ripley to stop transmitting from his radio tower.

The city claimed that has jurisdiction over transmissions made by hams based on an ordinance that it enacted in 2000. That law states that any tower, or antenna, not more than 70 feet in height can be owned and operated by a federally licensed amateur radio station operator if it is used exclusively as a receive only facility.

But that law appears to be in direct conflict with the Federal Communications Commission's long standing concept of Federal preemption. That's the mandate that it and only it has jurisdiction over radio transmission.

In his letter Imlay noted that all radio and telecommunications are regulated by the Communications Act of 1934 and cited a half dozen federal cases supporting this position. One was a 1936 lawsuit titled Fisher's Blend Station vs. Tax Commission of the State of Washington. In that action the Supreme Court held that by its very nature broadcasting transcends state lines and is national in its scope and importance. This characteristics said the court brings it within the purpose and protection, and subject to the control, of the commerce clause.

In his letter Imlay wrote that if no action was taken by Mustang that the ARRL would seek a "declaratory ruling" from the Federal Communications Commission. According to the news article Imlay said that if he does not receive a response from Mustang city officials that plans to send another before filing with the FCC.

City Manager Mike Rutledge told the on-line newspaper that he had received Imlay's letter and had referred it to Mustang's attorney. He said any response to the letter is up to the city's legal counsel.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in Los Angeles.

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If the ARRL decides to bring the matter before the FCC and if the agency grants such a declaratory ruling, it would likely at minimum direct the city to rescind its letter banning Ripley from transmitting. It could also go as far as warning the city that it had best keep out of matters that are preempted by Federal government mandate. (MustingNews.info)

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RADIO LAW: KEEN EYED HAM HELPS CRAFT ANTENNA ORDENANCE

New regulations for antennas and transmission towers in Dixon, California should not affect amateur radio operators there. This, thanks to a keen eyed local ham who took notice of a proposed ordinance under consideration by the Dixon City Council and made his voice heard.

In May, during a public hearing before the Planning Commission, Dixon resident Bill Paul, KD6JUI, voiced a concern about how a proposed ordinance to set standards regarding antennas and transmission towers might affect ham radio operators in the area. He was also concerned, according to a staff report, that a zoning ordinance that limits the area an antenna or tower can cover, might affect the type or height of antennas a ham radio operator could construct.

Commissioners recommended that the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance, subject to staff working with Paul to try and address the issues. During it's last meeting, the council tentatively approved the ordinance subject to staff removing any regulations that apply to amateur radio antennas.   (Vacaville Reporter)

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RADIO LAW: UK TOWNSHIP OK'S 11 METER HIGH HAM RADIO TOWER

Meantime, some good antenna related news for a ham in Stetton In the U.K..   That's where an amateur radio tower mast which is more than 11 meters high has been given the go ahead by town planners.

Members of Stretton Parish Council had objected to the proposed tower and antenna based on visual impact when the mast was raised. There were also four objections from the ham operators neighbors who claimed it would be out of keeping with the area and could interfere with TV reception in the area.

But the committee was given expert evidence that U.K. telecommunications regulator Ofcom is the agency with jurisdiction over the antenna and that therefore it should not be a consideration. The Radio Society of Great Britain told the planners that the installation of the hams tower and antenna could be of value to the area for use in emergency situations.

After hearing that when retracted that the tower will only be about 5 meters high and weighing all the other evidence before it, the borough council's development control committee backed the plans. An 11 meter high tower is roughly 36 feet here in the USA. (Southgate)

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RADIO BUSINESS: ICOM CONFIRMS IC-706 PRODUCTION HAS NOT CEASED

Contrary to Internet rumors production of the popular IC 706 Mark 2 G has not ceased. The erroneous report of the radio's demise came in a Wireless Institute of Australia news report that said that the 706 was no longer being made and that Navcom Electronics that there are only 14 units currently held in stock in Australia.

While that might be the case down-under, Amateur Radio Newsline has received word from Icom America that the decision to stop selling the IC - 706 was likely a one made by Icom Australia. On this side of the Pacific Icom America says that the IC - 706 MK 2 G will continue in the Icom America product line.

The original IC-706 was introduced over a dozen years ago and quickly developed what might best be described as a cult following. The radio was not all that much bigger than a dual-band FM transceiver of that era, but it packed an amazingly sensitive all band receiver and powerful transmitter ham band transmitter into a relatively tiny package measuring only 6.56" x 2.28" x 7.88".

Over the years the IC-706 has seen many upgrades. The latest version is the Mark II G which adds many new features and capabilities not found in the previous 706 and 706Mk II versions including the UT-106 DSP module as a standard feature. Many hams called it the perfect mobile and portable station and stayed with it even after rival manufacturers brought out their own tiny all band transceivers with similar or even more advanced features. Its also a radio with one of the highest resale values on the used equipment market.

Also included in the WIA story was a claim that Icom was instituting a five year warranty on all of its products. Well that's true only if you live in Australia. According to Icom America, That is an Icom Australia only project. No other Icom distributor is offering a 5 year warranty. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RADIO BUSINESS: VK FIRM GENESIS TO OFFER HAM RADIO SDR TRANSCEIVER KIT

Made in Australia may be the label on the next piece of ham gear you buy. This as a company down-under called Genesis Radio announces that it will be producing a new multi-band low power Software Defined Radio transceiver kit to be available world-wide.

The Genesis G59 transceiver will cover the amateur bands from 1.8 to 54 MHz and produce up to 10 watts output when coupled with the GPA10 amplifier. A version with extended band coverage, the G59D that covers the increasingly popular pan-European 70 MHz band should be available sometime next year as well.

More information on this new Australian ham radio transceiver kit available at www.genesisradio.com.au. (Press release)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: THREE INCUMBENT ARRL SM'S RE-ELECTED

Three incumbent ARRL Section Managers were re-elected in races that concluded on Tuesday, November 24th. In Alabama, Jay Isbell, KA4KUN out polled challenger Les Rayburn, N1LF by a vote of 513 votes to 167.

Meantime, up in the Alaska Section Manager election, Jim Larsen, AL7FS, of Anchorage, won his second two-year term of office when he received 176 votes. His challenger David Stevens, KL7EB, received only 65.

Lastly, Ron Cowan, KB0DTI, will continue as Kansas Section Manager after he received 382 votes while challenger Joseph Plankinton, WD0DMV, received only 175.

Eight other Section Managers ran unopposed and were declared re-elected. All begin their new terms of office on January 1, 2010. (ARRL)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: WA2HWV VIDEO TOUR OF THE VOA TRANSMITTER SITE A

Jim Hawkins, WA2WHV, says that he has uploaded a video of my 1998 tour of Voice of America Transmitter Plant 'A' to YouTube .

Jim says that the title is "Tour of Voice of America Transmitter Plant" and is hosted by Carl Lineberger, former senior technician. In it you will see a lot of the heavy iron that brings V-O-A programming to the world. This includes the giant 500,000 watt Marconi and Continental transmitters as well as some lower power units by Technical Materials Corporation and General Electric. In the case of the GE transmitter lower power means 250,000 watt capability.

According to WA2WHV the show runs 40 minutes and is broken into 5 parts. You can search for it using the find feature on the YouTube website by inputting the search argument "Tour of Voice of America or Transmitter Plant" or simply "Voice of America Transmitter." Jim adds that he hopes you enjoy taking the video tour. (Southgate)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the

volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD: DR. JERRY SEVICK, W2FMI - S.K.

One of ham radio's most prolific writers has become a silent key. This with word that Dr. Jerry Sevick, W2FMI, passed away on Sunday, November 29th at age 90.

Jerry Sevick, was a graduate of Wayne State University and a member of its Athletic Hall of Fame. He was drafted by both the Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions, but did not play professional football. He served as a pilot in the US Army Air Corps in WWII. He later graduated from Harvard University, with a doctorate in Applied Physics. He then taught at Wayne State University and worked as the local weather forecaster at WXYZ TV in Detroit. Dr. Sevick also worked for Bell Laboratories in Murray Hill, New Jersey and retired as the Director of Technical Relations. He was also a member of the New
Providence Amateur Radio Club.

It was his interest in amateur radio that launched Dr. Sevick into experiments with short vertical antennas and broadband matching networks. He is noted for a classic series on short vertical antennas that appeared in QST magazine. His April 1978 article on short ground-radial systems now serves as the world's standard for earth conductivity
 measurements.

In the course of designing networks to match coaxial cable to short ground mounted vertical antennas, the transmission line transformer was looked at as a possible vehicle. He undertook the characterization and design of transformers for low impedance applications. This resulted in his book Transmission Line Transformers, first published in 1990 by the ARRL and currently available from Noble Publishing. He also presented a series on baluns in Communications Quarterly and a series on unbalanced to unbalanced transformers in CQ magazine. The latter was lead to his book titled Building and Using Baluns and Ununs that was published by CQ in 2003.

Dr. Sevick was a Technical Advisor for the ARRL and a member of IEEE, Sigma Xi, Sigma Pi, Sigma and Phi Delta Kappa. A memorial service was scheduled for December 2nd at the Fellowship Village in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. (Information supplied by KT1B, K9AY, K2SSQ, CQ Magazine, bytemark.com, others)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: ANNUAL VOIP CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS

The 2010 Voice over Internet Protocol Conference will take place on Saturday, April 10th at the Circus-Circus Conference Area in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The event is sponsored by Nevada Amateur Radio Repeaters, Inc. which began it in 2002 as the Internet Radio Linking Project or IRLP was starting to

grow world wide. Nowadays the conference is open to all forms of VoIP communications, including IRLP, Echo link, D-Star, All Star Link, and various other associated applications.

The conference starts at 8:30 a.m. and runs until to 5 p.m. local Las Vegas time. Those interested in presenting a topic should let that be known as they register. Questions to w7aor(at) narri (dot) org. More information about the event along with registration forms are on-line at www.narri.org/voip_registration.html (W7AOR, others)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: TIME SHARING ON SO-67

Controllers of the SO-67 SumbandilaSat ham radio transponder are looking for input on the best way to utilize the new ham radio bird. This, because it is a shared payload that cannot be in operation all of the time.

In an effort to make this as painless as possible, SO-67 controller Jan Albert, ZR1AJK, is requesting comments on the possible use of regional coordinators to schedule access to SumbandilaSat. Coordinators would be responsible for setting up agenda's in advance for their specific regions. This, while taking into account the pool of possible satellite passes, as well as the need of the bird for local events. The SO-67 Command Station would then simply load the schedules on a weekly basis.

Initial focus has on Europe, the Republic of South Africa, South and North America including Canada, Japan and Australia, and New Zealand. Now, ZR1JAK is inviting suggestions for amateur radio use of the SumbandilaSat as it flies over other regions as well.

Interested satellite operators are invited to e-mail responses to the AMSAT bulletin board, or if you prefer, to ZR1JAK's work address: jak "at" sunspace "dot" co "dot" za. (Amsat News, ZR1JAK)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SPECIAL EVENT STATION COMMEMORATES LAUNCH OF XW-1 HAMSAT

To celebrate the launch of China's first amateur satellite called XW-1, AMSAT-China has set up a special event station using the callsign BT3WX. Operations at BT3WX have already commenced and the special event station will remain active until XW-1 is launched. The station plans to operate on all High Frequency amateur bands from 10 to 160 meters and on VHF and UHF amateur satellite bands. On satellites the modes include FM, SSB, CW, RTTY and PACSAT.

A specific launch date for XW-1 has not been released as but is expected in mid-December. The satellite's communications payload will include a beacon and three cross band transponders operating in FM, linear, and digital modes.

Meantime stations completing two-way communications with BT3WX on 9 different bands and modes can apply for the BT3WX H-F Communications Award. Stations completing two-way communications with BT3WX through at

least two different modes of transponders can apply for the BT3WX Satellite Communications Award. (ANS)

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HAM RADION IN SPACE: STRAIGHT KET NIGHT ON OSCAR 2010

AMSAT is inviting hams worldwide to participate in Straight Key Night on OSCAR 2010. Taking part in this event is both fun and quite easy. Just operate CW through any OSCAR satellite between 0000 and 2400 UTC on January 1st 2010, using a straight hand key. There are no other rules, no scoring and no need to send in a log.

In keeping with the friendly nature of this event, all participants are encouraged to nominate someone they worked for "Best Fist" of those you worked. Please send your nomination to w2rs@amsat.org. A list of those nominated will appear in the Amsat News Service and will also be published in the AMSAT Journal. (W2RS, ANS)

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DX

In D-X word that Willis Island is back on the air. David Burton reports that he has been assigned to the Bureau of Meteorology station on Willis for the next 6 months and will be operating with the call-sign VK9WBM. His station consists of a Icom IC-718 and an Alinco DX70. He will be activating the HF bands and 6 meters using a 2 element quad. QSL via VK4DMC.

K7WZB and K9WZB will be operating as K2V from the island of St. Croix from December 2nd to the 14th. They will use 160 through 6 meters and will be monitoring 6 most of the time for openings to the United States and Europe. Modes available will be SSB, RTTY, CW and PSK-31 on all bands. QSL via K9WZB, direct only. Further info at QRZ.com under the callsign K2V.

M0JAX is looking for 22 people with a full amateur radio license privileges to join a DXpedition to Bahrain in Leaving in February 2011. He is planning a two week trip based at the InterContinental hotel with eight stations on the air 24 hours a day. Operators will be working in three shifts to keep the stations on the air for the two weeks. I you are interested, send your details and why you think you would be an asset to this DXpedition to the Radio Society of Great Britain and attention RadCom Magazine. Your letters will be passed-on to M0JAX.

The S2DX team is preparing for another DXpedition to St. Martin's Island in the Bay of Bengal. The scheduled dates are February 21st to the 25th depending on the dates the licenses that they receive carry. This is the second DXpedition carried out by the group to the same location. They made over 3000 QSO's from there last January.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: DISABLED HAM DONATES MOBILE TO IRTS

And finally this week, in keeping with the spirit of the upcoming season comes word that the Irish Radio Transmitting Society has received a very generous donation from one of its members. A complete mobile ready to go.

The story goes this way. For health reasons EI6IJ was been forced to cease driving. Instead of putting his car up for sale he instead gifted his 2008 Kia Rio hatchback to Irelands national ham radio society. The vehicle had already been converted for disabled use and professionally outfitted out with a Yaesu FT-857 all band transceiver.

The society says that it won't actually keep the car very long. Instead it will put it up for sale with the proceeds used to assist members who for reasons of changed circumstances such as ill health or change of accommodation are finding it difficult to practice and enjoy their hobby. The monies will also support the promotion of amateur radio in schools and other youth organizations. (IRTS)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), using our temporary address of 28197 Robin Avenue, Saugus, California, 91350.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Damron, N8TMW, and I'm Jeff Clark, K8JAC, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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